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4 April 1973

MEMO FOR: JM 25X1A9a

SUBJECT : The ~~CONFIDENTIAL~~ Memo

1. John has performed the classic feat of mounting a white charger and racing off in all directions. The result is a confused, illogical, and self-destructive proposal, and whatever its purpose or genesis, the memo does not make good sense.
2. As a starter, his main target is "interagency coordination," which has apparently become a dirty phrase in OCI. Yet, nothing else would make these various agency products into national intelligence, and nothing else would provide the system of checks and balances that we now have. It is worth noting--and noting well--that the coordination system, while indeed timeconsuming if not at times ponderous, does not seek to emulate the estimative process, whereby an initial draft is successively watered down until agreement is reached, with impasses being solved through the use of often inexplicable or parochial "dissents." The NIS Program may ask producers to make adjustments to another agency's expertise, but the final statement of fact or opinion always devolves to the producer, who is granted the right to have the last word.
3. Second, John makes the typical error of categorizing consumers, assuming that a military planner needs only data on transportation or geography, that a policymaker can limit his topical interests, or that a naval officer will be interested only in another country's navy. In truth, each of these hypothetical users could have an urgent need for basic intelligence in any of our present categories, and hence each must be treated as if he were "the general consumer" that John refers to on p. 2. It is next to impossible to predict user needs, and over the years we have gone through successive painful realizations of that, as each "user survey" has verified the impossibility of identifying a "general consumer" as such.

4. Probably the weakest part of John's proposal is the "new basic intelligence product," which goes through the same old motions of eliminating everything that CIA doesn't produce, except in certain cases, such as armed forces, where he thinks CIA can do it better. We have a new product now, in the bound-by-chapter GS; we are in the process of establishing continuity and then moving into the separate chapter maintenance cycle. This in itself will tone down much of the "interagency coordination" that John gripes about, since chapters will be in different time frames and exact coordination of data will no longer loom so important.

5. Finally, John has a head-knocking contradiction in stating the new product should concentrate on areas about which the least is known, and in the next breath calling for the availability of data on every country where there is a U.S. interest. While it is true that the Nixon Doctrine lowers the priority for some areas (e.g., Latin America and Africa), there is a potential for U.S. interest everywhere in the world where U.S. firms do business, where U.S. ships and planes call, and where U.S. citizens live or visit.


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